

# Price Monitoring for Food Security in the Kyrgyz Republic

This issue of the Price Monitoring Bulletin is prepared based on the operational daily food price data collected by the National Statistics Committee from 18 markets across the country and disaggregated at province level as the average value (Chuy province - Tokmok, Kara-Balta; Osh province - Osh, Uzgen, Kara-Suu and Nookat; Talas province - Talas and Manas; Naryn province - Naryn and Chaeik; Batken province - Batken and Isfana; Jalal-Abad province - Jalal-Abad, Toktogul and Kerben; Yssyk-Kul province - Karakol and Balykchy; and Bishkek city). This is a secondary data analysis.

## Highlights

**SITUATION UPDATE:** The development of the global economy remains uncertain amid the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. International trade shows a decline in volumes, while the global commodity markets remain uncertain. All these factors continue to have a constraining effect on both the growth of the global economy and the economy of the Kyrgyz Republic. In January-February 2021, the Kyrgyz Republic's GDP decreased by 8.9 percent totalling 71.5 billion Kyrgyz soms. Negative trends continued to be observed in the construction, wholesale and retail trade sectors. The service sectors (49 percent) accounted for the highest share of GDP. The Consumer Price Index, which measures price inflation, increased by 10.4 percent for all goods and services and by 19 percent for staple foods (+24.6 percent for meat, +11.6 percent for bread products, +11.4 percent for milk and dairy products, +44.2 percent for oils and fats, +18 percent for vegetables, and +22.6 percent for sugar). While the increase in meat prices was driven by the high demand from neighbouring countries, the rise of other staple food prices was due to higher import prices. Rising food prices are affecting households' access to a nutritious diet, especially during the lean season (winter – spring). The Ministries of Economy and Finance reached an agreement with retail chains and product suppliers to ensure the purchase of certain food products (sunflower oil (excluding premium segment), first grade flour, granulated sugar and tin-formed bread) by the population at stable prices. The Government continues to monitor and stabilize food markets across the country through price controls on 11 essential food items and regulating import and export volumes.

The following section discusses the average prices for the two weeks from 24 February to 10 March 2021 in comparison to the previous two weeks, the previous month's average (February 2021), the monthly average in February 2020 (before the COVID-19 outbreak began in the country) and the annual average of March 2020 (when appropriate). The biweekly monitoring of food prices revealed the fluctuations of several commodities:

- **WHEAT:** During the weeks from 24 February to 10 March 2021, the national retail prices of wheat remained stable from the previous two weeks' levels, with an average price of 23.99 KGS/Kg. As of 10 March 2021, the highest price of wheat was observed in Bishkek city and Batken province (25 KGS/Kg) and the lowest price was in Naryn province (16 KGS/Kg). Globally, higher cereal prices were driven by lower production forecasts in major exporting countries, new and rumoured export restrictions, and export wheat taxes in some major producing countries. Wheat prices rose in most major exporting countries in December and early January and reflected news of new export restrictions in the Russia Federation. Prices remained stable compared to February 2021, but were 26 percent higher compared to February 2020, and continued to be higher than normal annual price fluctuations, within 15 percent of the benchmark.
- **OIL (COOKING):** The national retail prices of vegetable oil rose by another 2 percent from the previous two weeks' levels (157.60 KGS/l), reaching the highest value of all time. As of 10 March 2021, the highest price was in Naryn province (164 KGS/l) and the lowest was in Yssyk-Kul province (150 KGS/l). The Kyrgyz Republic has a high import dependency on vegetable oil due to its low internal production and its low capacity for the processing of oil seeds. The trend of increasing vegetable oil prices was caused by the increasing export prices in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, attributed to unfavourable weather conditions and a consequently lower harvest. Compared to February 2021 and February 2020, the prices were 2 percent and 65 percent higher, respectively, an increase above normal annual price fluctuations.
- **SUGAR:** The national retail prices of sugar increased by another 3 percent from the previous two weeks' levels, to an average price of 62.55 KGS/Kg. The recent increase in sugar prices was in line with global trends, as historically proven by the positive correlation between global and national prices. Globally, sugar prices increased in 2020 due to the prospect of lower sugar outputs in both Brazil and India, the two largest sugar-producing countries, caused by below average rainfalls. As of 10 March 2021, the highest price was observed in Batken province (67 KGS/Kg), while the lowest price was in Naryn and Yssyk-Kul provinces (61 KGS/Kg). The prices of sugar were 4 percent and 43 percent higher than February 2021 and March 2020 levels, respectively, an increase significantly higher than normal annual price fluctuations. The price of sugar was 52 percent higher compared to February 2020.

The rise in prices for sunflower oil and sugar is associated with an increase in suppliers' prices, their significant reduction in volume due to poor harvests, as well as the depreciation of the national currency. The government has imposed a ban on the export of sugar and vegetable oil due to the rise in prices.

- **MEAT (BEEF AND MUTTON):** During the weeks from 24 February to 10 March 2021, the national retail prices of meat remained stable for mutton and beef compared to the previous two weeks' levels, with an average price of 447 KGS/Kg for beef and 440.42 KGS/Kg for mutton. As of 24 February 2021, the highest prices for beef were observed in Bishkek city at 453 KGS/Kg and for mutton in Osh province at 457 KGS/Kg. The latest increase in the prices of meat in Kyrgyzstan was caused by the restrictions imposed by Kazakhstan on the export of meat and livestock, which boosted the demand from Uzbekistan and encouraged Kyrgyzstan to increase its exports to Uzbekistan. The prices for beef and mutton increased by 1 percent compared to February 2021 levels. The prices of beef and mutton rose by 26 percent and 30 percent, respectively, compared to March 2020, and by 28 percent and 37 percent, compared to February 2020, an increase above normal annual price fluctuations.
- **EGGS:** The national retail price of eggs remained stable from the previous weeks' levels, reaching 105.96 KGS/10 pcs. The trend of increasing egg prices over the past months was caused by the growing export prices in Kazakhstan attributed to an increase of feed (wheat) prices and the instability of the currency exchange. As of 10 March 2021, the highest price was observed in Talas province (117 KGS/10 pcs) and the lowest in Batken province (101 KGS/10 pcs). The price of eggs remained stable compared to February 2021 and was 38 percent higher compared to February 2020, significantly higher than normal annual price fluctuations.

**EXCHANGE RATE:** During the two weeks from 24 February to 10 March 2021, the Kyrgyz som slightly depreciated from 84.68 KGS to 84.8 KGS per 1 USD, the Russian ruble also slightly depreciated from 74 RUB to 74.26 RUB per 1 USD and the Kazakh tenge depreciated from 415 to 420 KZT per 1 USD. However, these currencies depreciated by 21 percent, 11 percent and 10 percent, respectively, against the US dollar since the beginning of March 2020, according to the exchange rate of the National Bank. Lower remittance levels were among the factors affecting the weakening of the external position of the Kyrgyz som. Currency movements are one of the main driving forces of the retail prices of imported basic food commodities including wheat, vegetable oil and sugar.

**GLOBAL OIL AND RETAIL PRICES:** Since the beginning of 2020, crude oil prices slumped dramatically following the 'Russia-Saudi Arabia oil price war' in March 2020 and the decline in consumer demand with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, further impacting the global economy. According to global forecasts, the full recovery of oil demand levels may not take place until 2022, while the demand for 2021 expected to remain below 2019 levels. Despite the rising oil price forecasts for early 2021, experts still expect a downward oil price at the beginning of the second quarter of 2021 when global oil production is forecasted to rise and cause inventories to draw up slower. During the weeks from 22 February to 8 March 2021, the WTI prices increased from 61.67 USD per barrel to 65.03 USD per barrel, while Brent prices increased from 64.73 USD per barrel to 68 USD per barrel. As of 8 March, WTI and Brent prices remained 39 percent and 29 percent higher, respectively, than March 2020 levels. The national retail prices significantly increased for fuel (AI-92) by 11 percent and for diesel by 7.2 percent as of 11 March 2021. The reason for the price increases was the significant increase in oil producer prices in the Russian Federation, the export ban of fuel in Kazakhstan and the devaluation of the local currency. The local oil association expects a significant retail fuel price increase (60-65 KGS) in the next half year. On 2 March, the new government banned fuel exports beyond the borders of the Eurasian Economic Union to stabilize prices for oil and oil products in the domestic market. Since the prices of diesel and petrol heavily impact food prices, the stability of diesel and petrol prices was critical, especially in rural areas across the country.

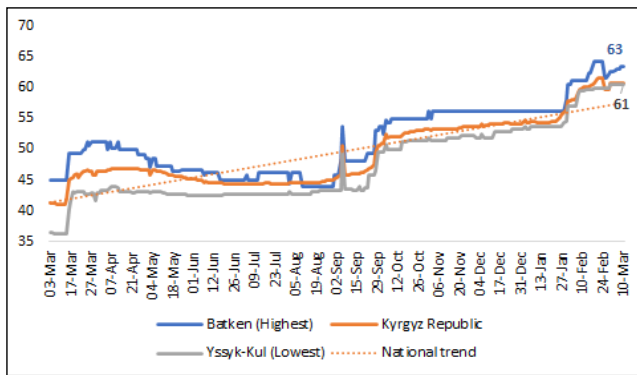
**AVAILABILITY:** Since the last price monitoring issue, the availability of wheat and wheat flour decreased in Chuy province, slightly in Jalal-Abad, Batken and Naryn provinces, and significantly in Yssyk-Kul and Osh provinces. Overall, the availability of wheat and wheat flour was good. Twenty-four districts showed very good levels of availability though the situation was critical in eleven districts. Considering the prevalence of poverty, the already high share of income spent on food by the poor and the increasing retail prices for wheat and wheat flour in the provinces—which affected the access to food and households' purchasing power—particular attention should be devoted to districts showing 'insufficient' availability in Yssyk-Kul province. Since the last issue, the availability of vegetable oil worsened in Yssyk-Kul and Osh provinces, while it remained unvaried elsewhere. Only eleven districts showed 'sufficient' stock levels. Given the high poverty rate in Batken province at 33 percent, the most dramatic situation was observed in Leilek and Baktan districts where 'insufficient' availability may have further hindered the ability of the most vulnerable to consume vegetable oil. Compared to the previous issue, the availability of sugar slightly improved in Chuy and Jalal-Abad, while it worsened in Talas, Osh and Yssyk-Kul provinces. Overall, the situation remained critical with 'insufficient' or 'severely insufficient' stock levels in 33 districts. Considering the high incidence of poverty and the high prices and the scarce availability of sugar, particular attention should be devoted to Leilek and Batken districts in Batken province.

## Trends of Retail Prices of 12 Staple Foods (Weekly Trends) - Kyrgyz Republic

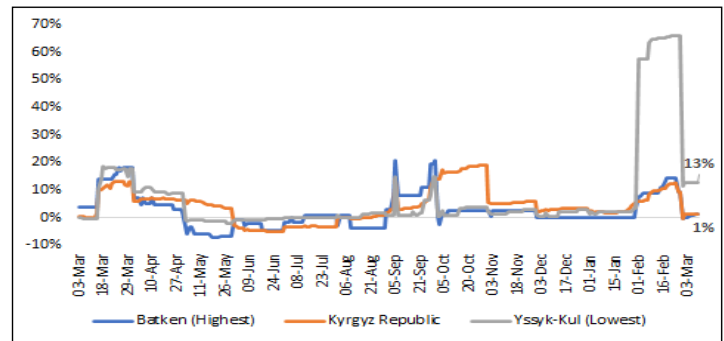
	24 Feb—10 Mar 2021 (KGS/kg)	10—24 Feb 2021 (KGS/kg)	Trend		24 Feb—10 Mar 2021 (KGS/kg)	10—24 Feb 2021 (KGS/kg)	Trend
Bread (1st grade)	48.97	48.95	0%	Rice (medium)	80.24	80.50	0%
Milk	38.12	38.46	-1%	Sugar	62.55	60.75	3%
Meat (beef)	447	445.34	0%	Wheat	23.99	23.91	0%
Meat (mutton)	440.42	438.94	0%	Wheat flour (1st grade)	39.21	39.26	0%
Oil (cooking)	157.60	154.89	2%	Wheat flour (high-grade)	48.29	48.29	0%
Potatoes	32.57	32.41	0%	Eggs	105.96	106.29	0%

## SUGAR

Pic 1. Retail sugar prices (KGS/Kg)

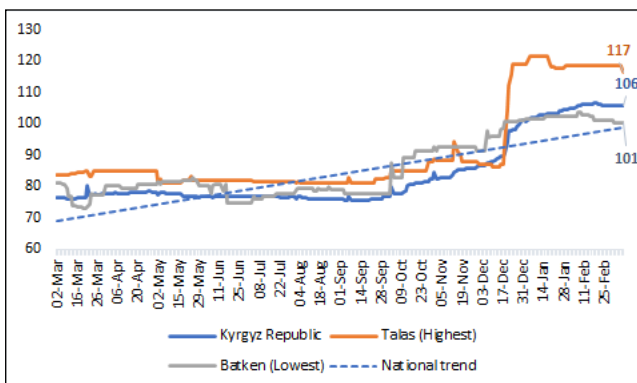


Pic 2. Growth rate of sugar, as a percentage of the daily prices from the previous average monthly price

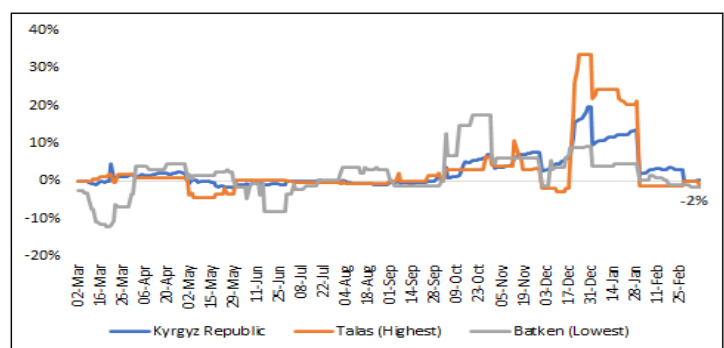


## EGGS

Pic 3. Retail egg prices (KGS/10 pcs)

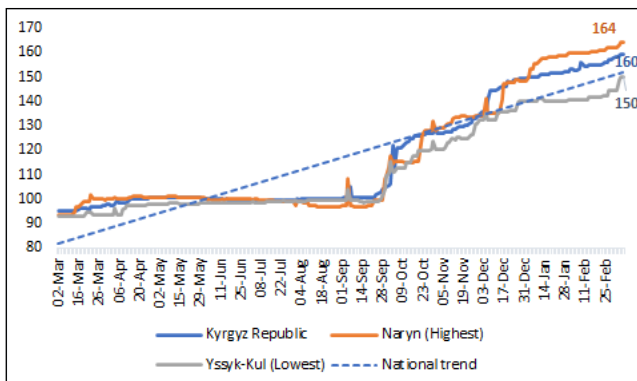


Pic 4. Growth rate of eggs, as a percentage of the daily prices from the previous average monthly price

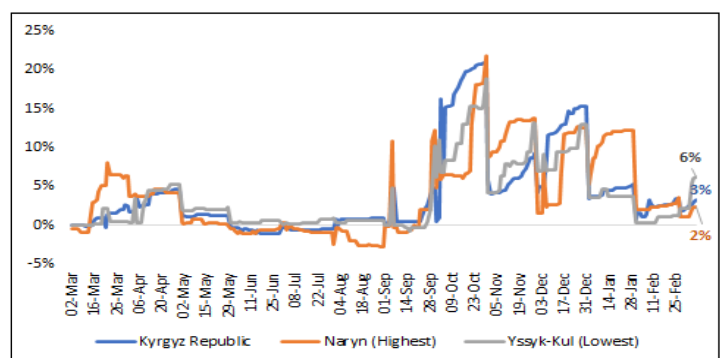


## OIL (COOKING)

Pic 5. Retail vegetable oil prices (KGS/Kg)

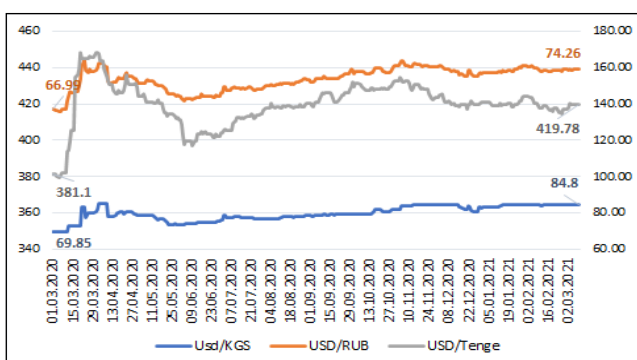


Pic 6. Growth rate of vegetable oil, as a percentage of the daily prices from the previous average monthly price



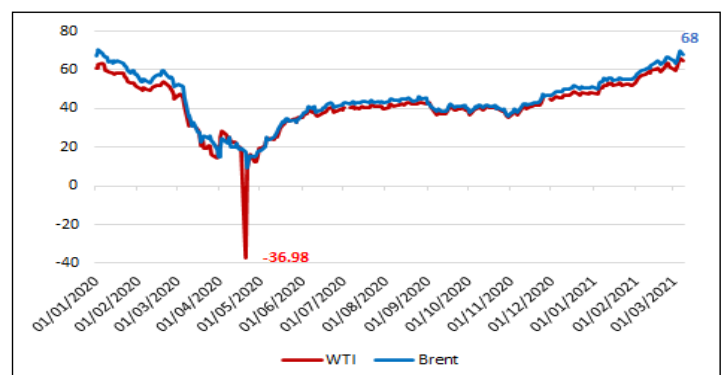
## EXCHANGE RATE

Pic 7. Exchange rates of the Russian ruble, Kyrgyz som and Kazakh tenge against the US dollar (source: National Banks of Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan)



## GLOBAL OIL PRICES

Pic 8. Daily WTI, Brent prices (Jan 2020 to 08 Mar 2021, source: EIA)



## Annex: Prices of 13 Food Commodities

The table shows the changes of the average retail prices of the current day, current week and current month compared to the average prices of the previous month.

Province	Commodity	Mar 10 Price (KGS)	Change in Price (%)				Level of Fluctuation				Commodity	Mar 10 Price (KGS)	Change in Price (%)				Level of Fluctuation			
			24 Feb - 10 Mar / 10 - 24 Feb	WEEKLY PRICE / Feb 2021	WEEKLY PRICE / Mar 2020	WEEKLY PRICE / Feb 2020	24 Feb - 10 Mar / 10 - 24 Feb	WEEKLY PRICE / Feb 2021	WEEKLY PRICE / Mar 2020	WEEKLY PRICE / Feb 2020			24 Feb - 10 Mar / 10 - 24 Feb	WEEKLY PRICE / Feb 2021	WEEKLY PRICE / Mar 2020	WEEKLY PRICE / Feb 2020				
BATKEN																				
	Bread (1st grade)	8	0%	0%	11%	12%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	33	4%	4%	22%	32%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	8	0%	0%	5%	5%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	74	-1%	0%	-2%	-2%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	8	-1%	-1%	31%	21%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	33	-1%	101%	31%	44%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	8	3%	3%	18%	18%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	25	2%	3%	17%	23%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	8	0%	0%	29%	29%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	40	0%	0%	12%	17%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	8	-2%	-3%	10%	14%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (high grade)	49	0%	0%	8%	11%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	8	1%	2%	61%	63%	►	►	►	►										
BISHKEK CITY																				
	Bread (1st grade)	47	0%	0%	7%	7%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	33	0%	1%	38%	0%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	68	0%	0%	7%	7%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	74	0%	0%	1%	1%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	105	0%	0%	39%	39%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	63	-1%	82%	38%	49%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	453	0%	0%	26%	27%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	25	0%	0%	32%	32%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	440	0%	0%	31%	41%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	39	0%	-1%	17%	20%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	40	0%	0%	0%	0%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (high grade)	45	0%	-1%	14%	15%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	161	2%	2%	65%	65%	►	►	►	►										
CHUY																				
	Bread (1st grade)	44	0%	1%	10%	11%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	30	1%	0%	28%	37%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	67	0%	0%	0%	4%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	87	1%	0%	7%	13%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	109	-1%	-1%	-1%	37%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	30	-2%	97%	41%	50%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	425	1%	2%	1%	30%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	22	0%	0%	17%	20%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	427	0%	1%	0%	35%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	41	0%	0%	11%	17%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	33	-1%	-3%	-1%	-9%	►	►	►	▼	Wheat flour (high grade)	48	1%	1%	5%	9%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	156	3%	3%	62%	65%	►	►	►	►										
JALALABAD																				
	Bread (1st grade)	54	0%	0%	3%	4%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	34	2%	2%	3%	43%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	78	0%	0%	4%	6%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	88	0%	0%	3%	4%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	111	1%	2%	31%	33%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	34	-3%	80%	37%	47%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	448	1%	1%	28%	31%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	24	6%	6%	8%	15%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	452	1%	1%	28%	31%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	40	0%	0%	9%	14%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	32	-2%	-4%	4%	-11%	►	►	►	▼	Wheat flour (high grade)	46	0%	0%	9%	9%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	154	1%	2%	64%	66%	►	►	►	►										
NARYN																				
	Bread (1st grade)	57	1%	1%	7%	7%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	28	0%	0%	21%	38%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	67	0%	0%	11%	11%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	73	0%	0%	4%	4%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	113	-1%	-1%	36%	37%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	28	-3%	109%	40%	49%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	440	0%	0%	25%	31%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	16	0%	0%	-9%	-9%	►	►	►	▼
	Meat (mutton)	435	1%	1%	26%	33%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	36	1%	1%	12%	14%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	28	-5%	-5%	4%	-12%	►	►	►	▼	Wheat flour (high grade)	44	8%	7%	11%	13%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	164	1%	1%	68%	72%	►	►	►	►										
OSH																				
	Bread (1st grade)	60	-2%	-2%	0%	0%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	33	0%	0%	29%	39%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	79	2%	2%	7%	-4%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	98	-1%	0%	-4%	6%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	110	-1%	1%	33%	63%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	33	1%	87%	26%	29%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	441	1%	1%	25%	3%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	23	0%	0%	10%	21%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	457	1%	1%	28%	30%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	41	0%	0%	8%	9%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	33	-6%	1%	5%	-4%	▼	►	►	►	Wheat flour (high grade)	53	-1%	0%	11%	11%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	154	1%	-6%	59%	63%	►	▼	►	►										
TALAS																				
	Bread (1st grade)	51	0%	0%	9%	12%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	30	4%	7%	35%	37%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	71	0%	0%	16%	17%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	65	-2%	1%	17%	20%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	117	0%	0%	40%	42%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	30	1%	109%	39%	45%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	423	2%	3%	30%	37%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	20	2%	2%	25%	28%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	422	3%	5%	30%	37%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	39	0%	0%	9%	16%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	33	3%	5%	15%	15%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (high grade)	49	1%	1%	27%	32%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	154	0%	1%	64%	67%	►	►	►	►										
YSSYK-KUL																				
	Bread (1st grade)	46	0%	0%	4%	4%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	30	2%	2%	38%	63%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	63	0%	1%	7%	7%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	85	0%	0%	8%	8%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	111	0%	0%	55%	48%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	30	-4%	93%	46%	58%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	442	0%	1%	24%	31%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	20	1%	1%	11%	11%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	424	2%	2%	28%	37%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	41	1%	1%	13%	15%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	35	0%	2%	0%	37%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (high grade)	55	2%	2%	8%	9%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	150	3%	0%	56%	0%	►	►	►	►										
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC																				
	Bread (1st grade)	49	0%	0%	7%	7%	►	►	►	►	Potatoes	33	0%	1%	34%	48%	►	►	►	►
	Bread (lepeskha)	68	0%	0%	6%	7%	►	►	►	►	Rice (medium)	80	0%	0%	3%	4%	►	►	►	►
	Eggs	106	0%	0%	38%	38%	►	►	►	►	Sugar	33	-2%	85%	37%	46%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (beef)	447	0%	1%	26%	28%	►	►	►	►	Wheat	24	0%	0%	22%	26%	►	►	►	►
	Meat (mutton)	442	0%	1%	30%	37%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (1st quality)	39	0%	0%	14%	17%	►	►	►	►
	Milk	38	-1%	-1%	2%	-1%	►	►	►	►	Wheat flour (high grade)	48	0%	0%	14%	15%	►	►	►	►
	Oil (cooking)	160	2%	2%	64%	65%	►	►	►	►										

▲ Price increase above normal price fluctuation  
 ► Normal price fluctuation  
 ▼ Price decrease below normal fluctuation

Price fluctuation is considered normal if change within:  
 +/- 5% for 1 month, +/- 10% for 3 months, +/- 15% for 1 year

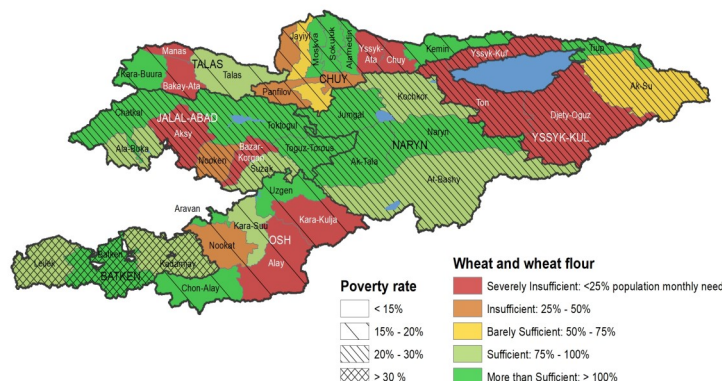


## Annex 2: Availability of three main food commodities

The maps below show the level of availability and sufficiency of three main staple foods at district level — wheat and wheat flour, vegetable oil and sugar as of 12 March 2021. Given the high import dependency that the Kyrgyz Republic has of these commodities, they are being monitored by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration and reflect the population's overall physiological needs of the commodities under consideration. The overlapping of poverty rates shows a population's economic access to food and provides useful information on the geographical areas to which particular attention should be devoted, as insufficient levels in these areas may further prevent the poor to consume the commodity. It should also be noted that the poverty rates are pre-COVID-19 estimates, which have worsened significantly as a result of the pandemic.

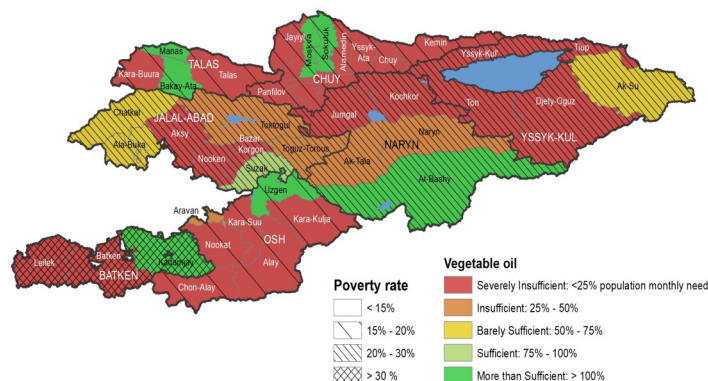
### WHEAT AND WHEAT FLOUR

Since the last price monitoring issue, the availability of wheat and wheat flour decreased in Chuy province, slightly in Jalal-Abad, Batken and Naryn provinces, and significantly in Yssyk-Kul and Osh provinces. Overall, the availability of wheat and wheat flour was good. In the past two weeks, 24 districts reached 'sufficient' wheat and wheat flour stock levels to cover over 75 percent of their population's monthly needs. Among these 24 districts, 16 districts were able to satisfy the needs of their entire population for more than one month. Although the availability may have been 'sufficient', given the incidence of poverty, increasing retail prices affect the ability of the most vulnerable to access wheat and wheat flour. Three districts showed 'insufficient' levels (Panfilov, Nookan and Nookat) and 11 districts experienced 'severely insufficient' levels of wheat and wheat flour stock (Aksy and Bazar-Korgon districts in Jalal-Abad province, Alay and Kara-Kujia districts in Osh province, Bakay-Ata and Manas districts in Talas province, Yssyk-Ata and Chuy districts in Chuy province and all districts in Yssyk-Kul Province except for Ak-Su and Tiup). Considering the incidence of poverty (24 percent), the already high share of income spent on food (86 percent) and the increasing retail prices for wheat and wheat flour in the province, which affected the access to food and households' purchasing power, particular attention should be devoted to districts showing 'severely insufficient' levels in Yssyk-Kul province as the scarce availability may further prevent the most vulnerable to consume wheat and wheat flour.



### OIL (COOKING)

Since the last price monitoring issue, the availability of vegetable oil worsened in Yssyk-Kul and Osh provinces, while remained unvaried elsewhere. Eleven districts showed 'sufficient' levels to satisfy more than half of their population's monthly needs, with seven districts being able to satisfy their population's needs for over a month. Given the incidence of poverty in the province (28 percent), the high retail prices observed in Naryn—the highest in the country—could have hindered the capacity of the most poor to access cooking oil even in the districts showing good levels of availability. The availability of vegetable oil was 'insufficient' in five districts (Toktogul, Toguz-Torou, Naryn, Ak-Tala, and Aravan) and 'severely insufficient' in all districts in Chuy province (except for Moskva and Sokuluk), Kara-Buura and Talas districts in Talas province, Ask, Nookan and Bazar-Korgon districts in Jalal-Abad province, Kochkor and Jumgal districts in Naryn province, Leilek and Batken districts in Batken province and in all districts in Osh (except for Aravan and Uzghen) and in Yssyk-Kul (except for Ak-Su). Given the high poverty rate in Batken (33 percent)—a factor that affects access to the commodity—the most dramatic situation was noted in Leilek and Batken districts, where the 'insufficient' availability may have further hindered the ability of the most vulnerable to consume vegetable oil.



### SUGAR

Compared to the previous issue, the availability of sugar slightly improved in Chuy and Jalal-Abad, while it worsened in Talas, Osh and Yssyk-Kul provinces. Overall, the availability of sugar was critical. Only seven districts had 'sufficient' levels to satisfy more than half of their population's monthly needs, with five districts being able to satisfy their population's needs for over a month. Although there were good availability levels in some districts, the overall incidence of poverty in Naryn (28 percent) and Jalal-Abad (27 percent) provinces may affect the ability of the poorest households to access sugar. All districts in Batken (apart from Kadamjay), Osh (except Kara-Suu), Jalal-Abad (apart from Ala-Buka and Chatkal), Chuy (except Panfilov, Jaiyl, Moskva and Sokuluk), Yssyk-Kul (apart from Ak-Su) and Naryn provinces (with the exception of At-Bashy) faced a status of 'severely insufficient' levels of sugar stocks that satisfied less than a quarter of their population's monthly needs. Considering that 33 percent of the population was living below the national poverty line in Batken province—with the poorest quintile already spending 57 percent of their income on food—and that the highest retail price for sugar was observed in this province, particular attention should be devoted to the 'severely insufficient' levels in Leilek and Batken districts. Poverty and higher prices affect access to food, which combined with a reduced availability, may further compromise the ability of the poor to consume sugar.

